



## **Literacy Folder for Students with Significant Disabilities:** **An Overview (refer to page 2 for links to related resources)**

### **What is it and who is it for?**

The Literacy Folder is an individual student folder that will follow the student across grades to provide a clear picture of growth in literacy learning and communication skills. A Literacy Folder should be initiated and maintained for *all* students with significant disabilities. It will help teachers, therapists, and others quickly access previous assessment information, sample portfolio entries, and materials, strategies, and programs that have been implemented.

### **Why is it needed?**

The Literacy Folder is essential to provide a seamless transition in student literacy/communication accomplishments and needs across grade levels. For students with significant disabilities, assessment can be arduous and time-consuming, as it must be systematic and detailed to accurately measure every increment of progress. It is crucial to retain assessment data (including informal assessment) to chart progress, but also to avoid wasting valuable time. Portfolio entries across time will help educators plot change across a longer time span than a single school year. Current teachers will be able to find information such as materials and programs that were successfully used with each student, and special interests which support literacy efforts.

### **Literacy Folder Content: Highly Recommended Materials**

- 1. Communication Profile:** Because many of these students have complex communication needs, this one-page profile is essential. It provides information on a student's needs/status related to both expressive and receptive communication issues.
- 2. Formal Assessments:** information regarding formal assessments such as DIBELS, Communication Matrix, etc.
- 3. Informal Assessments:** copies of informal assessments such as the Literacy Rubric, The Bridge, the Intervention Planning Tool, etc.
- 4. Portfolio Entries:** This will include samples of student work. Be sure to include as many writing genre as possible (poems, stories, reading response, photo descriptions), and information about *how* the student produced the work.
- 5. Literacy Experiences Summary:** The Literacy Experiences Summary sheet should be filled out at the end of the year. This one-page sheet describes literacy opportunities, interests, and challenges throughout the year.
- 6. Video Clips:** Video clips of students engaging in literacy experiences in both small and large groups will provide a quick vision to a new team. Include both reading and writing experiences, showing level of scaffolding.
- 7. Audio Clips: Digital** oral sound bites are a great way to show a student's participation in a literacy experience.

8. **Grade-level Specific Entries:** The content of a Literacy Folder will vary at different grade levels. Follows are sample entry ideas according to grade levels.
- **Preschool to Kindergarten** might also include a list of language translators and sensory processing information, and parent comments and logs.
  - **Elementary Grades** might also include accommodations of the literacy curriculum used in general education.
  - **Middle Grades** might also include a wider range of genre of writing, as students develop skills.
  - **High School** might include information on literacy as it relates to work and independent living.

**Links to Resources for the Literacy Folder:**

- **Literacy Experiences Summary Sheet** (Musselwhite, 2010): This one-page summary provides a ‘snapshot’ of the student’s literacy experiences through the school year.
- **Communication Profile:** This one-page summary sheet (a companion to the Literacy Experiences Summary Sheet) provides a means to document very basic information about a student’s communication support needs. Links to more comprehensive communication assessment tools and other resources are provided on the Communication Profile.
- **Sample Assessment Tools** (Musselwhite, 2010): This chart provides an overview of various literacy assessment tools which can be used to assess literacy skills of students with significant disabilities, along with links to the tools.
- **1-Minute Writing Context Checklist** (Musselwhite & Hanser, 2009): The 1-Minute Writing Context Checklist should be attached to several writing samples each year, so that factors such as the level of scaffolding can be seen.